

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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O R 151305Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2709
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USUN NY

S E C R E T JIDDA 5208

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, LE, SA
SUBJ: CRISIS IN LEBANON

REF: (A) BEIRUT 3865, (B) STATE 174090

1. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ABD AL-RAHMAN MANSURI TELEPHONED
POL COUNSELOR NIGHT OF JULY 14 TO SAY THAT IN ANSWER TO OUR
TELEPHONE QUERY OF NIGHT OF JULY 12, PURPOSE OF FOREIGN
MINISTER PRINCE SAUD'S TRIP TO DAMASCUS ON JULY 10 WAS TO
DISCUSS LEBANESE CRISIS. PRINCE SAUD ASKED THAT WE CONVEY
TO DEPARTMENT REQUEST THAT WE DO EVERYTHING WE COULD TO
PERSUADE PHALANGE NOT TO ATTACK SYRIANS AND PROVOKE THEM
INTO TURNING THEIR PRESENCE IN LEBANON INTO OUTRIGHT OCCU-
PATION. PRINCE SAUD UNDERSTOOD FROM ASSAD THAT SYRIANS
WOULD RESTRAIN THEMSELVES IF NOT ATTACKED. MANSURI SAID
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 JIDDA 05208 151353Z

THAT PRINCE SAUD ASKED THAT U.S. ALSO USE ITS INFLUENCE TO
PERSUADE ISRAEL NOT TO INTERVENE. ISRAEL SHOULD NOT PRO-
VOKE SYRIANS OR ENCOURAGE CHRISTIAN RIGHTISTS TO PROVOKE
SYRIANS. SAG PREFERS THAT LEBANON NOT BE PARTITIONED.
IT WANTS TO SEE AUTHORITY OF SARKIS BOLSTERED AND CHRISTIAN
RIGHTISTS SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO GIVE UP SOME OF THEIR
POWER AND TO SUPPORT SARKIS.

2. POL COUNSELOR TOLD MANSURI THAT WE WERE ALREADY BENDING EVERY EFFORT TO DIRECTION PRINCE SAUD DESIRED. WE HOPED THAT SAUDI ARABIA WOULD ALSO WORK TO INFLUENCE ALL PARTIES TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT. WE APPRECIATE EVERYTHING AMBASSADOR SHAIR IS DOING AND WE HOPE HE WILL CONTINUE HIS EFFORTS. MANSURI SAID THAT SAUDI AMBASSADOR WOULD OF COURSE CONTINUE TO BE ACTIVE BUT THAT HE HAD NO INFLUENCE WITH PHALANGE OR CHAMOUNISTS.

3. MANSURI ASKED WHEN WALDHEIM WAS GOING TO BEIRUT. POL COUNSELOR SAID THAT IT WAS NOT YET CERTAIN THAT HE WAS GOING TO BEIRUT. HOWEVER, SAUDI GAZETTE AND ARAB NEWS HAD CARRIED ANNOUNCEMENT ON JULY 12 THAT HE WAS COMING TO SAUDI ARABIA AND SYRIA AFTER HIS VISIT TO KHARTOUM. MANSURI SAID HE DID NOT KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT WALDHEIM COMING TO SAUDI ARABIA BUT THAT HE WOULD CHECK ON IT.

4. IN ANSWER TO QUESTION, MANSURI SAID HE DID NOT KNOW OF ANY COMMON ARAB EFFORT ON LEBANON.

5. COMMENT. JUDGING FROM THIS CONVERSATION, PRINCE SAUD MUST HAVE BEEN REASSURED ON SYRIAN MOTIVES DURING HIS TRIP TO DAMASCUS. DURING OUR CONVERSATION WITH MANSURI ON JULY 10, WE GATHERED SAG WAS CONVINCED THAT ASSAD WAS SIMPLY LOOKING FOR PRETEXT TO OCCUPY LEBANON OUTRIGHT.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 JIDDA 05208 151353Z

IT SEEMS THAT SAUD NOW THINKS THAT ASSAD DOES NOT HAVE SUCH A DESIGN AND THAT HE STILL SUPPORTS SARKIS.

6. LOCAL PRESS JULY 15 GIVES JULY 17 AS DATE FOR WALDHEIM'S VISIT TO SYRIA AND JULY 20 FOR TRIP TO SAUDI ARABIA. DANIELS

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